

# *Family Readiness Newsletter*

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*Virginians hear the "sound of freedom" during the Realistic Urban Training Exercise -- Children raise patriotic signs aboard Fork Union Military Academy during a visit from Marines of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit in Fork Union, Va., April 24, 2007. The Marines landed helicopters at two school campuses and visited with students during a recent break in training during RUT. The 22nd MEU consists of its Ground Combat Element, Battalion Landing Team, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment; Aviation Combat Element, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 261 (Reinforced); Logistics Combat Element, Combat Logistics Battalion 22; and Command Element. The 22nd MEU is scheduled to deploy later this year. (Official Marine Corps Photo by Cpl. Peter R. Miller).*

For more information on the 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit, go to our website at:

[www.22meu.usmc.mil](http://www.22meu.usmc.mil)

To Contact the Family Readiness Officer, call (910) 451-0401 or email

[john.rahe@usmc.mil](mailto:john.rahe@usmc.mil)



**A message from Colonel Douglas M. Stilwell**

## **Families and friends of 22d MEU -**

As we continue preparations for our deployment, the following is a quick update on the training the MEU has been executing since my last update in February.

### **EXPEDITIONARY STRIKE GROUP INTEGRATION EXERCISE (ESGINT)**



In March the MEU embarked on the three ships of Amphibious Squadron 8 (USS KEARSARGE, USS PONCE, and USS GUNSTON HALL) and spent two weeks at sea with the other ships of the Expeditionary Strike Group (USS VICKSBURG, USS PORTER, and USS CARR). This exercise was the first at-sea training period incorporating all the ships of the ESG and all the elements of the MEU. ESGINT is a comprehensive exercise designed to prepare the MEU and Strike Group for future training events and the upcoming deployment. The Aviation Combat Element (ACE) concentrated on aircrew training by executing day and night deck landing qualifications, and its crews achieved every goal we had set for the exercise. The ACE also supported

the Battalion Landing Team (BLT) and Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB) as they performed a myriad of training events including raids, mass casualty and humanitarian assistance scenarios, and a TRAP mission (Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel). The MEU set ambitious goals for ESGINT and made great progress towards interoperability, both with our Navy counterparts and between our major subordinate elements.

### **OFFSITE TRAINING AT FORT PICKETT, VIRGINIA**

During April, the MEU deployed to Fort Pickett near Blackstone, Virginia to concurrently accomplish two primary training events. The first was Realistic Urban Training, or RUT. RUT included five Situational Training Exercises (STX's) conducted in urban environments ranging from Fort Pickett to the civilian communities of Richmond, Blackstone, Crewe and the Fork Union Military Academy. The first STX was focused on BLT 3/8's Company K as the MEU's motorized raid force. The final four STX's focused on the Marine Special



Operations Company (MSOC), which was transferred to the tactical control of the MEU on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Demonstrating the ability to integrate the MSOC into MEU operations was the primary focus of RUT, and the MEU-MSOC team met the mark superbly with noteworthy support from the ACE, BLT and MEU Reconnaissance Platoon. The second primary training event at Fort Pickett involved a series of evolutions oriented towards specific MEU(SOC) missions and collective tasks in support of combat readiness. Focused primarily on the BLT and CLB, much of this training was enhanced by contracted battlefield effects and role players that realistically simulated the environments where Marine forces currently are employed. Highlights for the CLB included live-fire convoy courses and executing a humanitarian assistance mission with subject matter expertise provided by a representative from the



U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The BLT performed a near continuous rotation of its companies between live fire and maneuver ranges, operations in urban terrain, and marksmanship training. The two weeks at Fort Pickett ultimately provided extraordinary opportunities for all of the MEU's elements to "train like we will fight" in realistic environs that closely simulated what we may face while away from home.

### **KEEPING INFORMED**

This web site will continue to serve as your best source of information on 22d MEU activities. It will be updated regularly with stories and photographs of your Marines and Sailors performing their duties.

You also can access our 24-hour hotline by calling 1-877-817-7322 (toll-free) or 910-451-8780 (Jacksonville, N.C. area), and press '4' at the prompt.

All official and factual information regarding the 22d MEU's movements, activities, and operations will come directly from me via this web site ( <http://www.usmc.mil/22ndmeu/> ), the MEU hotline, or the Key Volunteer Network. Other sources of information may be misleading or incorrect.

### **FAMILY READINESS**

Family readiness remains a key and critical component of the MEU's overall combat readiness. Taking care of our families at home allows our Marines to focus on the missions that are ahead. One of the primary means of assuring family readiness is the Key Volunteer Network (KVN). The KVN consists of unit spouses that receive training to serve as communications links between the Command and its families, sources of information and referral, and ultimately leaders in the effort to maintain a sense of community within the unit. The MEU is blessed with a dynamic and effective KVN, and we always are ready to integrate additional spouses who would like to participate. If you are interested in serving as part of the MEU KVN, please contact the MEU Family Readiness Officer.

I cannot overstate the importance of family preparations for the upcoming deployment. We continuously are preparing and training your Marine or Sailor, but our overall effectiveness will be less than optimal if our families are not adequately prepared as well. We have numerous resources available in support of this goal, and I encourage you to investigate them with one of our Key Volunteers. In the coming months we will spend the majority of our time away from our families, so it is imperative that everyone is well prepared and has an effective pre-deployment plan in place. Our Key Volunteers work very hard to keep you informed of unit activities and helpful resources. Please get to know them and engage them for assistance!

I extend my warmest regards to you and yours. Semper Fidelis, and God bless all of you.

Sincerely,

Douglas M. Stilwell  
Colonel, USMC  
Commanding Officer





### **SERGEANT MAJOR'S CORNER**

Dear Friends and Families of 22d MEU Command Element,



The MEU has been off and running with a busy pre-deployment training schedule. The training the Marines & Sailors have received will prove instrumental to our success in future endeavors. Though separation from loved ones is never easy, I hope the recent short periods of separation have showed the families how to manage the household in the absence of their husband or wife. Additionally, the recent off-site training provided an opportunity for the Key Volunteers to exercise their program in a realistic manner.

Moving 2200 Marines, Sailors and all of their equipment back and forth to the ships, Ft A.P. Hill, Va., and Ft. Pickett, Va., is no easy task. There is an incredible amount of planning, coordination, and supervision that goes in to these logistical movements. No sooner than the units arrive at the training site, the planning begins for moving personnel and equipment back to Camp Lejeune. Movement of people and equipment is only a small part of the overall picture. Upon arrival at these training sites there is a multitude of training to be conducted including live fire for multiple weapons systems, tactical planning, maneuvering of tactical vehicles, logistical support, medical training, communications systems training, aviation, and lots of other Marine stuff. In order to successfully accomplish all of these training objectives it requires each and every Marine and Sailor to unselfishly work long hours and constantly watch out for each others' safety. From Colonel to Private every Marine and Sailor is critical to mission success. Thus far, the MEU has scored high marks on every training evolution we have been challenged with.

Though our successes achieved thus far seem promising, we are only half way through our training cycle. Since our return from TRUEX at Ft. Pickett, Va., the command has been working feverishly in preparation for another at sea period. The tempo will remain high until our pre-deployment leave period in July. Hopefully each time our Marine and Sailors go away for training to hone their combat skills for deployment, the families are exercising their family readiness plans in order to be ready and confident when we deploy this summer.



In recognition of the dedicated support of the military spouse and all that they sacrifice by enduring the Marine Corps way of life, the date 11 May 07 has been designated as Military Spouse Appreciation Day. Thank you for all that you do to hold the military families together during the demanding operational tempo we continue to endure. I ask that you pause and find the time to be mindful of the freedoms we have that others don't. I ask that you remember our fallen Marines and Sailors who have given the ultimate sacrifice; I ask that you pray for their families and for our wounded; I ask that you continue to keep us all in your thoughts and prayers as we continue our vigorous pre-deployment training cycle. And lastly, I ask that you continue to serve our country by taking care of the home front in our absence as we prepare to deploy.

Sergeant Major Hall



## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



### “The Value of a Good Example”

A young American aviator in World War II took off with his squadron from an aircraft carrier in the far South Pacific. Their mission was to bomb select targets and return home to the aircraft carrier. He was forced to return to the carrier prematurely when he discovered that his airplane was low on fuel and couldn't complete the mission. On his way back to the aircraft carrier, he encountered a whole squadron of Japanese fighter planes moving in the direction of the aircraft carrier. Seeing the danger to his comrades, he immediately attacked the Japanese squadron of planes and single handedly managed to ward off the attackers. He became an American hero, at a time in our history when corruption and gangsters, like Al Capone, were prevalent. When word reached his hometown in Chicago, they elected to name an airport after him – Chicago “O'Hare” Airport. His name was Butch O'Hare. But the greatest part of the story remains to be told here. As Paul Harvey used to say, “And now for the rest of the story.” You see the father of Butch O'Hare was a lawyer best known as “Easy Eddie” because he made it look exceptionally easy to free his clients from punishment of the law, like Al Capone, no matter how ruthless their criminal activity. However, when his son was born (Butch O'Hare), Easy Eddie began to feel guilty that his reputation had robbed his son of a good name. So, to assure his son a good name, he decided to turn states evidence over to the authorities against Al Capone. Within a year, that decision cost Easy Eddie his very life. Al Capone had unleashed his men to gun him down in the streets of Chicago. Butch O'Hare was influenced by his father's bravery and courage to do what was right in the face of impossible odds. It is not hard to understand the heroic act of Butch O'Hare in World War II when viewed in light of his Father's love and sacrifice for his son.



It is my prayer for each one of us, as we look forward to our upcoming deployment, that we be cognizant of the privilege we have to serve as role models for our partner, children, and loved ones as they observe our actions and demeanor throughout this time of pre-deployment planning. How will we be remembered by our loved ones during the deployment and long into the future years as they reach back and capture the memories of this moment in our family history? Will our memories reflect, with equal measure, the testimony of Easy Eddie seen through the eyes of his beloved son in the midst of the most difficult of moments? Will our devotion and courage to them serve to inspire and sustain them when challenging moments during the deployment come? Will we be the heroes of our closest community – our family? If so, it's likely we will meet with a heroes welcome at our reunion.

Blessings and warmest regards. Chaplain Bill “Gunny” Appleton

God bless you,

Bill “Gunny” Appleton  
22d MEU Chaplain



**22d MEU WEBSITE:**  
**WWW.22MEU.USMC.MIL**  
**FRO**



LtCol John Rahe

[John.rahe@usmc.mil](mailto:John.rahe@usmc.mil)

John.rahe@kearsarge.usmc.mil

451-0401

**FRSNCO**

GySgt Wade Covington

[wade.covington@usmc.mil](mailto:wade.covington@usmc.mil)

wade.covington@kearsarge.usmc.mil

451-5926

**CHAPLAIN**

CDR Bill Appleton

[bill.appleton@usmc.mil](mailto:bill.appleton@usmc.mil)

bill.appleton@kearsarge.usmc.mil

451-3269



## WHAT IS L.I.N.K.S?

The Key Volunteer Network needs spouses like you to keep families informed and help promote family readiness! With families in a higher state of readiness, individual Marines are better able to perform their assigned missions efficiently, effectively, and safely, thereby promoting a higher state of unit readiness.

Marine Corps Family Team Building Cherry Point provides standardized training courses once a month at the Key Volunteer Center. The training is open to all spouses of active duty Marines and Sailors. Training includes: Key Volunteer Structure, roles and responsibilities of a Key Volunteer, confidentiality, providing referrals and acting as a communication link. Contact your unit Key Volunteer Coordinator or the Key Volunteer Trainer to schedule training. The Key Volunteer Trainer can be reached at (910) 451-7550.

**L.I.N.K.S.** (Lifestyle, Insights, Networking, Knowledge & Skills) is a volunteer Marine Corps orientation program designed by spouses for spouses. Experienced spouses, called "mentors", address all aspects of the military lifestyle such as Marine Corps traditions, how to survive deployment and frequent moves, understanding the military pay system and a variety of other topics that will make the journey through Marine Corps living much smoother. **L.I.N.K.S.** is practical information about services and benefits available to all Marine Corps families.

**L.I.N.K.S.** is open to all Marine spouses (active duty, reserve and retired) and those spouses who serve with Marines.

Our goal at L.I.N.K.S. is to provide a positive environment for spouses to learn and manage the demands of a Marine Corps lifestyle. Our participants learn the history and traditions of the Corps as well as practical knowledge about military benefits and community resources. By offering an orientation to spouses, L.I.N.K.S. enhances family readiness.

## UPCOMING L.I.N.K.S. SESSIONS

22/23 May 0900-1300

29-31 May 1800-2100

### 2007 KEY VOLUNTEER TRAINING SCHEDULE



#### Key Volunteer Basic Training

9 & 23 June

10 & 17 July

#### Key Volunteer Coordinator Training

13 June

11 July

#### Key Volunteer Resource Training

12 July



To register for any training session, call 451-0176.

On-Base childcare is available for class attendees taking weekday classes. First come, First serve, call 451-2672





## MARRIED PRE-DEPLOYMENT BRIEF

June 4th  
1830 (6:30PM)  
Camp Lejeune Base Theater  
THIS BRIEF WILL ENSURE YOU ARE PREPARED

## 22d MEU COMMAND ELEMENT FAMILY DAY

June 10<sup>th</sup>  
1230-1500 (3:00PM)  
Marston Pavilion

### *Useful information*

### Reference websites and Family Readiness Office

### Resource and Referral Information

Reference	Purpose	Website
American Red Cross	Emergency information to Service Members	<a href="http://www.redcross.org">www.redcross.org</a> or 1-877-272-7337
MCCS One Source	Referral information/ virtually any question	<a href="http://www.mccsonesource.com">www.mccsonesource.com</a>
L.I.N.K.S.	Spouse information and online training	<a href="http://www.usmc-mccs.org/links/index.cfm">www.usmc-mccs.org/links/index.cfm</a>
MyPay	Pay Statements (LES), and adjust pay	<a href="http://www.dod.mil/dfas/">www.dod.mil/dfas/</a>
MOTO MAIL	To send e-letters to deployed service members	<a href="http://www.motomail.us/">www.motomail.us/</a>
Hurricane preparedness	Local Emergency information and help	<a href="http://co.onslow.nc.us/emergencyservices">http://co.onslow.nc.us/emergencyservices</a>
Marine Corps Family Team Building	Provides educational resources and services	<a href="http://www.usmc-mccs.org/mcftb/index.cfm">www.usmc-mccs.org/mcftb/index.cfm</a>
Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society	Provides emergency assistance to Families	<a href="http://www.nmcrs.org/">http://www.nmcrs.org/</a>
Serviceman Group Life Insurance (SGLI)	Benefits for Veterans	<a href="http://www.insurance.va.gov/">http://www.insurance.va.gov/</a>
USO	Recreational Services and support	<a href="http://www.uso-nc.org/jaxarea.html">http://www.uso-nc.org/jaxarea.html</a>
United Way	Assistance organization	<a href="http://unitedwaync.org/localuw/finduw.php">http://unitedwaync.org/localuw/finduw.php</a>
Cell Phones for Soldiers	Provides prepaid calling cards while deployed	<a href="http://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com">http://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com</a>
MCCS Lejeune	Services/Events on Lejeune	<a href="http://www.mccslejeune.com">http://www.mccslejeune.com</a>





## **Free Stuff** (verified through 22d MEU, JAG and MCCS)

<http://www.operationhomelink.org> - Free computers for spouses or parents of deployed soldier in ranks E1 - E5.

<https://www.operationuplink.org> - Free phone cards.

<http://anysoldier.com/ForSoldiersOnly.cfm> - To sign up for sponsoring soldier care packages for theater.

<http://www.operationshoebox.com> - Free shoebox care package.

<http://www.treatthetroops.org> - Free cookies.

<http://bluestarmoms.org/airfare.html> - Lowest airfare available.

<http://bluestarmoms.org/care.html> - Free care packages.

<http://www.heromiles.org> - Free air travel for Emergency Leave, and for the family members of injured service members to travel to Medical facility.

<http://www.bluestarmothers.org/airlinespecials.php> - Airline discounts for R & R.

<http://www.booksforsoldiers.com/forum/index.php> - Free books, DVD's, CD's.

<http://www.militarymoms.net/sot.html> - Free care packages (your family member signs up to have sent to you).

<http://operationmilitarypride.org/smsignup.html> - Free care packages.

[http://www.soldiersangels.org/heroes/submit\\_a\\_soldier.php](http://www.soldiersangels.org/heroes/submit_a_soldier.php) - Get adopted to receive stuff.

<https://www.treatsfortroops.com/registration/index.php> - Free gifts and care packages.

[http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2004/n11232004\\_2004112312](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2004/n11232004_2004112312) - Free shipping/packing materials for shipping to troops.